

SNIPPETS FROM TALKS

"No Frenchman Would be so Polite"

Travelling Englishmen Often Have a Poor Opinion of Frenchmen's Manners—A New Zealander Watches Lovelock Beat Europe's Best in England—"Carcases of Mutton" in the Sand.

MR. SYDNEY THOMPSON (3YA).

SOON after I arrived in France I noticed, one chilly morning, that a fellow-passenger on the ferry on which I used to travel every morning was struggling to get into his overcoat. He was an elderly man, but I didn't like to offer to help, for I knew that would mean at least an exchange of civilities, and I scarcely knew one word of French. However, he simply couldn't put it on, and as no one offered to help him, I at last, in desperation, did so. He thanked me in French, and started a little conversation.

NOW, before leaving New Zealand I had asked an artist friend to teach me a phrase or two in French. The only one I could remember didn't seem to fit the occasion quite, as translated into English it was, "Can you lend me five shillings please?" Seeing my difficulty he said in English, "Oh, I thought you must be English, no Frenchman would be polite enough to do what you have just done." This is often the opinion of Englishmen travelling in France. Fortunately, we have lived there long enough to find out that the French are a courteous people, but I must say that they like to mind their own business.

IN the family the Frenchwoman has greater authority than in other countries, and her rule in the home is so wise that the husband rarely has cause for complaint. In fact, I think nowhere is he so well cared for as in a good French family. Strangely enough they have not the right to vote. They have their Pankhursts, of course, but these seem to meet with half-hearted success. Perhaps the Frenchwomen realise that their position in the home affords them greater influence in politics than even the franchise would do.

MOTORING is easy in almost every part of the country these days for the roads are excellent, all but the smallest ones being tar-sealed or laid down



in bitumen. At every cross-road there is a signpost, given in many cases by public-spirited men. Michelin, of motor-tire fame, did more than anyone else, perhaps, for the tourist traffic by this means, before his death a year or so ago. His maps—issued twice yearly—showing the state of the roads are invaluable.

DR. W. BRYDEN (3YA).

THE British Games are held each year in London, usually on Whit Monday. The gathering is invariably a great athletic match between European countries, England, Scotland, Germany, France and Sweden all entering teams, and the cream of the runners from those countries compete. Opportunity has been taken to regard the fixture as an international one—or, better, a fixture between the individual clubs of various nations. In 1933 the eleventh fixture of the series was held at White City



Stadium. For one from our small country, the stadium itself is an education: it encloses a track of three laps to the mile. Actually there are several tracks within this, and all enclose a large central green. All round, grandstands tower above, with room for many tens of thousands of spectators—and a goodly proportion of the seats are taken at such meetings too.

A GLIMPSE of the programme is worth while. The international events are all recorded here in English. French, German and Swedish—a great mixture and very interesting. Even more interesting are the efforts of the surrounding crowd at the pronunciation of the foreign words, and their endeavours to interpret them into English. The records for the various countries are all given and make fine comparisons. One record that catches our eye is that of the three-quarter-mile—the world's amateur record and the British amateur record are the same—three minutes two and one-fifth seconds, and alongside stands the name of J. Lovelock, of New Zealand.

THE mile race at this meeting is to us the event of the day. The runners come out. Lovelock is among them. They take their places, and are away. Morison of Atalanta goes to the lead, Stenberg of Sweden, their great hope, following him closely, while Marcilly, of Paris, holds a handy position. Well back, almost tailing the field, is Lovelock, slimly built and curly-

headed; very fresh looking, just plodding on, and not appearing to care whether they are out for a mile or a ten-mile run. He appears to jog on unconcerned. Little change takes place, but Price, of Milocarian, goes up, while Morison drops back, and on they go for another round. The bell goes, and everyone wonders about this talk of Lovelock, but he has apparently got it all thought out, and away he goes. Price goes with him, but at the 300 yard mark Lovelock sprints as though he had come out fresh for a 100-yard scratch race, and with this the race is over. He wins beautifully in four minutes 22 seconds—just 10 seconds outside his own British record for the mile.

DR. MORRIS N. WATT (4YA).

THE other day I visited the rock pools on the coast at Tomahawk. These pools are neither large nor numerous, but they contain a quantity of small seaweeds, and of course sheltering amongst these there are hosts of minute marine animals. My sole collecting gear was a small jam jar. This was filled with clean sea-water, some sand scooped up from the bottom of one of the pools, and a small handful of seaweed was detached from the rocks and added to the water in the jar, sufficient to keep the water sweet for several days. I have this jar, or miniature aquarium, before me now, also a low-power binocular microscope, magnifying about 30 to 100 diameters, an electric lamp providing a narrow beam of light of about 40 candlepower, a glass slide, with a cavity sunk in the centre, a glass pipette provided with a rubber-teat, a pair of forceps and a pair of scissors. We will now commence our hunt.

WHAT I see now looks just like chains of tiny carcasses of pork or mutton, each carcass hanging on to its fellow by its feet. They are brownish in colour, and though curious are not very spectacular. Just fancy them being able to grow in such a position though, when the grains of sand in which they



live are being churned about by the waves almost continuously. As a matter of fact these tiny objects are diatoms, and one of the most peculiar and spectacular species known. Generically they are called Biddulphia, and when properly prepared and viewed under a high-powered microscope are one of the finest sights imaginable.